1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

128 727 555 primitive legal thinking, the fact and its legal recognition tend to fuse, and either is spoken of as the whole; the modern layman, e.g., still speaks of "my money in the bank" to describe what is neither his money, nor any money, nor in the bank, but a debt the bank owes him. So with this matter of the coup. The exploit is in strictness no coup, but the new material for 727 one. If unrecognized, the exploit becomes a matter of individual memory, 555 perhaps of individual grievance. *Only recognition in due "legal" form turns deed into coup.*[2] But as soon as recognized, the recognition aspect fades from thought, and the deed that was its reason and justification *seems* to stand alone. As in all cases where legal rights are accurately tailored to the facts, it is enough to deal with the facts. But that does not mean that the legal phases can be overlooked. The minute they are lacking, or are in dispute, they will become important, and may become crucial.[3] This is the case with an exploit accomplished, unwitnessed, and not believed, or of one claimed by each of two or several as his own.

The stealing of tethered horses from within a hostile camp ranked as a very high honor, but it was not nearly so valued as striking a fallen enemy who lay near his own lines, or drawing blood from an enemy in hand to hand combat.

The Comanche honored two coups struck on the same victim by different persons. This arrangement was an efficient way of providing sufficient coups to meet the cultural demands of the society—an inflation of the currency of war prestige. The first man to reach the body of a fallen enemy struck it with his weapon and uttered the cry, "*ahé*" ("I claim it"), gaining thereby equal honor with the man who had done the killing. But if a bow or gun had been used to bring down the enemy, this second coup-counter received greater honor for his deed than did the slayer himself.

182 727 555 The problem of adjustment of institution to social end is interesting. Superficially, skill at long-distance killing would seem of more immediate social value to a fighting people. But the stress on hand-to-hand valor or dangerously close approach to the enemy is more than shallow glorification of wolf over fox. The deeds honored are in good part the kind of deeds that toughen a warrior to stand when he is needed. Grinnell, on the other hand, sees in it merely a cultural survival of the traditional days when the Cheyenne, for instance, fought perforce with sticks and stones because they had no bows or guns.[4]

[2] Note the ritual formula for the transference of a recognized coup by its owner-performer when the coup is given to a friend as a gift. See p. 29.

[3] Cf. Ritual Evidence, pp. 103–106.

[4] George Bird Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians* (New Haven, 1924), vol. 2, p. 36.

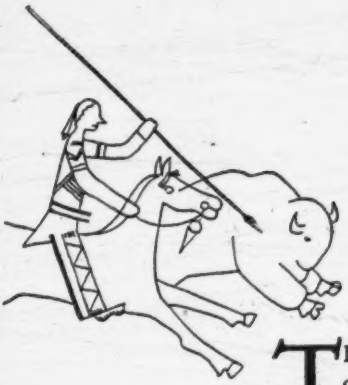
1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

heads of the forebearing elders. Indeed, boys will be boys. And peace-making may on occasion father trouble.

One is forced to wonder if youth would have dared such action before the days of white contact. Was this a sign of cultural disintegration? One suspects so. One cannot give a definite answer, but against the generous indulgence always shown to boys by the Comanche elders, there is to be put the fact that the Smoke Lodge was one of the first Comanche practices to go after white contact. Old men died off. The rising generation did not carry on the practice. The effrontery of the boys may have been a sign of its weakening hold. And in any going culture one may expect the normal human reaction: that what on one occasion may be a joke, an escapade, or a licensed blowing off of steam, will on sufficient repetition become a nuisance or an outrage and be dealt with as such.

In this survey of associations we have observed that the division of Comanche society into compartmental groupings had not gone very far. Age classes were lacking. The old men in the Comanche Smoke Lodge formed a sort of Council of Elders, but they were not taken too seriously, nor their opinions held to be law. Military groupings were too embryonic to have left their mark; medicine societies were largely lacking in demonstrated legal significance. Where groups did enter into the legal complex we shall see that they were formed about the kinship and friendship bond.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6



III.

The Horse and the Buffalo

THE dominating characteristics of the "typical" nineteenth century Plains Indian culture, according to Clark Wissler, were the use of the horse, the buffalo, the tipi, the soldier band, and the Sun Dance. Although Wissler tagged them as a "typical" Plains tribe, the Comanches never developed the soldier bands beyond a weak, incipient imitation, and it is unlikely that the Sun Dance acquired any meaning for them, since the only one they held was a prelude to disaster. The warfare pattern of the Plains they could readily adopt, for that was an individualistic game. The military societies, however, called for a kind of internal organization which was foreign to their Shoshonean traditions, and since there was no notable functional advantage to be derived from such societies (as there was from warfare), they sensed no need to develop the military clubs to any great extent. The Sun Dance functioned as a tribal integrator for most Plains tribes and as a focal point of Nativistic revivalism for the peripheral Shoshones at the beginning of the twentieth century, but in the case of the Comanches, again with Shoshonean atomism in mind, it appears that there was no interest in tribal integration until sudden disintegration faced them in the eighteen seventies. Then their interest in the Sun Dance as a tribal catalyst produced for them nothing but disaster and the destruction of the old culture.

If, then, the Comanches lacked the typical military societies and the Sun Dance, what was there that made them typical Plains In-

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

On the Reservation

The integrating nature of the Sun Dance for the Comanches is in part revealed by the closing act of the four-day period of preparation. After the victory rejoicing following the sham battle was over and just as twilight was drawing in, a crier rode through the great encampment, telling the people to get ready. Each band assembled before its lodges. Then, all starting together, each doing its favorite dance and singing as it came, all the bands of the whole Comanche nation (save the Wasps, who had gone back to their homes in Texas) moved in unison toward the dance lodge in the center of the great camp circle. When finally they reached the lodge, they clustered in one great mass before its eastern entrance. In a solid body they danced with a slow stomping step. The People for the first and last time in all their history were together as one.

After the buffalo hunt on the morning of the fifth day, the Sun Dancers prepared themselves. The crier called for them to bathe, and for anyone who was going to go into the lodge to watch or drum or sing to do likewise. While the dancers were preparing themselves, their wives, mothers, or aunts made beds of sage along the wall on the western half of the lodge. These beds were on the floor of the little compartments formed by a screen of cedar or cottonwood set out about four feet from the wall of the lodge. Here the dancers could stand or lie down to rest when not dancing.

After the sun had reached its noon position, the dancers, drummers, and chorus filed into the lodge. A huge round drum, upon which a half-dozen older men could thump in unison, was placed just south of the entrance. Each drummer had his stick—and some drummers had rattles.

The dancers retired behind the screen and painted themselves, and when all was ready, the drummers began their first song. The dancers stepped forth, and with gaze fixed on the center pole, they made little jumping movements in time to the beat; with each jump emitting a short blast on the eagle-bone whistle held between their teeth. It was just like any other Plains Indian Sun Dance. So it went until late at night and through the following three days.

Men with power performed miracles, and people came forward to hang gifts on the center pole. Boys who were learning to be warriors tied their little gifts to arrows which they shot up into the pole.[13]

[13] See also Linton, "The Comanche Sun Dance," *loc. cit.*, 420–28.

8: Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933) 1941 NO6 Comanche NO6

BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

THE COMANCHE SUN DANCE AND MESSIANIC OUTBREAK OF 1873

114 A confirmation of the Comanche Sun Dance[1] occurs incidentally in the valuable 668 historical work of Professor R. N. Richardson.[2] Richardson does not treat of the Sun 796 Dance itself, but he has produced some important cultural data that deserve to be called to the attention of anthropologists.

The recent work of Spier on the Prophet Dance of the Northwest[3] has established the cultural matrix of the several messianic cults of western North America in a number of deep-lying and apparently ancient, indigenous traits. The Comanches can also be fitted into this picture.

668 It is an hitherto unrealized fact that the Comanches in 1873 had their own short- 182 lived messianic outbreak. It is particularly notable that they did not use the cere- 535 monial form of the then current Prophet Dance (with which they most likely had 796 no direct contact). It was the Sun Dance which was adopted as the ceremonial vehicle! The Sun Dance was a wholly new feature in Comanche culture, devoid of associations which tied it too closely to other religious ends; and it possessed the elements of ritualized supernaturalism and the novel and spectacular which seem to be so important in messianic revivalism.

668 Richardson's fully documented account, which is derived from the official communications of observers who were in the field at the time,[4] reveals the following essential facts (corroborated at some points by the field notes taken by the Santa Fe Laboratory of Anthropology Ethnology Field Study Group, 1933):

a) "When conditions were already alarming (i.e., unrest on the Kiowa-Comanche reservation), the Comanches conceived the idea of holding a tribal medicine dance similar to the annual ceremonies of the Kiowas. This was a new thing for the Comanches."[5]

668 b) This idea was promulgated by the famous young medicine man and warrior, 792 Isatai, whose prestige was based upon a number of powers. He had established his invulnerability to bullets (which was common enough), and he had "raised the dead." But more important were his successful predictions that the comet which was attracting much attention at the time would disappear within five days and that it would be followed by a summer-long drought. According to the reports, he had also "ascended above the clouds, where he had communed with the Great Spirit."[6]

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[1] Cf., R. Linton, *The Comanche Sun Dance* (American Anthropologist, Vol. 37, 1935), pp. 420–428.

[2] R. N. Richardson, *The Comanche Barrier to South Plains Settlement* (Glendale, Cal., 1933), pp. 373 ff.

[3] L. Spier, *The Prophet Dance of the Northwest and Its Derivatives* (General Series in Anthropology, No. 1, 1935).

[4] F. W. Smith and J. W. Smith to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Sept. 26, 1874, Central Superintendency, S 1328; Haworth to Beede, April 25, 1874; Haworth to Hoag, May 6, 1874.

[5] Richardson, *op. cit.*, p. 372. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 372.

[pp. 1-300 not processed]

20: Wallace H-4,5 (1945) 1953 NO6 Comanche NO6

make the cultural transition they have been called upon to accomplish. As a result of its work, many tribal superstitutions are being discarded for modern scientific concepts. Although hardly a Comanche would accept a white physician at the beginning of the reservation period, the Indian practitioner today is almost a forgotten man.

The Comanches are still confronted with many sociological and psychological problems of adjustment. They have not entirely disintegrated, nor have they been completely assimilated. They are still Indian and want to follow the Indian pattern; their environment, experience, and teaching encourages them to discard it. They are intensely proud of being Comanche, and cherish their cultural heritage. They feel that they were unjustly robbed of their homeland, but know that they must make the best of their situation. The conflict between the old and the new often prevents the acceptance of any regular pattern of conduct and leads to confusion or unusual situations.

The matter of custom is vital to the Comanches. It is difficult to discard tradition. Some old women still wear their blankets, and a few old men continue to paint their faces and to wear their hair in plaits. The tradition of generosity does not fit well in American society for it is an impediment to economic security. Their idea of a pleasant life does not include saving, because saving had no place in their primitive society. The give-away dance has not entirely disappeared, and those who give are the losers and afterwards may seek the aid of the government.

There still exists a strong incentive toward the glorification of the individual. This character trait was a regular feature of the old social system, where the aim of the warrior was to gain glory and where there was constant acknowledgment of his achievements. It led to an immense sensitiveness to praise and censure. The Comanches, as a result, require more praise than the white man to function, and they suffer more than the white man from censure. The attitude was readily apparent in 1945. More than two hun-

29: Hoebel E-4,5 (1933) 1969 NO6 Comanche NO6

and actually in many, a girl had no formal voice in the choice of her husband. Her brothers gave her away in exchange for a consideration. The takers were usually older and established warriors and hunters who had the goods. In the Comanche ideal such arrangements made for the best marriages. But they were marriages in which the woman was at the mercy of her husband. Working against the stability of such marriages was a strong current of romantic idealism among the young. The ambition of the adolescent girl was to be a *naiβi*,[5] i.e., a beautiful maiden with lustrous, black hair hanging in long braids, and dressed in a fine fringed buckskin dress. The young bucks for their part strove to attract the attention of the girls by playing the role of *tuiβitsi*: "a handsome young man who looks good on a horse." Wife-absconding was really an escape in which a frustrated wife sought a more romantic match with a daring warrior.

Comanche elopements were invariably linked to a war party. The man in the case would be going on a raid with his friends, and he would make an assignation with the woman to go along. It was a way provided by custom to violate the marriage rights of the rightful husband as defined by custom and sustained by law! A nice example of internal inconsistency in the ways of a culture.

When a woman and her lover took off with a war party, two courses were open to the jilted husband. He could mount in hot pursuit in the hope that he could overtake them before they reached enemy territory. Or he could bide his time until they returned from the raid. In enemy country he could not press his suit; here all Comanches had to stand shoulder to shoulder. Aside from this, he could institute his action wherever he might be able to confront his tortfeasor. He might take along some compatriots—brothers, real or putative—to strengthen his courage and his arm, if need be. A real man, however, went alone. It was not necessary for him to gather witnesses, for a Comanche legal action was in no sense a trial. Questions of evidence rarely, if ever, entered. The wife-stealer, or even the adulterer, had no desire to conceal his deed; his aim was to flaunt his prestige in the face of the challenged husband.

If he followed the dictates of decorum, he politely addressed the defendant as "brother." The defendant replied in kind. Did not Comanche brothers share their wives? Syllogistically the reasoning runs:

> Men who share a wife are brothers.
> This man has assumed a share in my wife.
> Therefore, he is my brother.
> (But he is going to pay for the privilege!)

The immediate goal of the prosecuting husband was to get *nanewɔkɐ*, restitutive damages. As an opening gambit he placed his demands high,

[5] Phonetic symbols are used as in the International Phonetics System.